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ABSTRACT

Students, especially those who are not going on to higher education after high school graduation, have little information about where to turn for help the day after high school graduation. These young people need support and encouragement in making plans for their future. Students, their parents, and school staffs all share responsibility for the successful transition of high school graduates to the next phase of their career. Every school district in the United States needs to develop and implement some type of school transition program for their graduates. A "handover card" could be developed to assist districts in developing a management information system and district accountability system. A meaningful attempt at career development would begin well before the senior year; it would begin when the students enter the school system or at least when they enter high school. Schools, students, and parents can implement specific steps as a "countdown to graduation" 6 months before the event. Then, each graduate should be given a "handover card" that would supply information to the next school, organization, or employer to which the graduate goes. (KC)

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ED 381 686

Countdown to Graduation

School Transition Theory
The Handover Card Process

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COUNTDOWN TO GRADUATION

BY

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INTRODUCTION:

This is a conceptual think piece based upon my ideas of school transition theory as applied to high school seniors. In recent years I have been writing and speaking about the process of school transition theory for high school graduates moving on to the next phase of their lives.

For lack of a better word I have been suggesting some form of **"handover card"** for each student graduating from high school. It is based upon my idea that each and every student should be handed over to some next agency upon graduation from high school. The **"handover card"** would provide a means for making sure that all students were given the opportunity for a smooth transition to the next phase of their life.

This essay is designed for **high school seniors, parents of seniors, and high school staffs**. It is designed as a conceptual think piece for those concerned about school transition theory.

A SIMPLE TRANSITION THEORY:

I fully realize that career development and transition theory are complex topics and require a great deal of study. The current interest in workforce preparation and career pathways is based upon many of the ideas of the early 1970's under the topic of career education.

My idea of school transition theory is simple and to the point. It is a starting point and not an ending point. It needs consideration and further discussion.

When students graduate from high school they usually follow one of three exit paths. These paths are as follows:

1. To further education (college or university, community colleges, trade schools, etc.)

2. To employment (full time or part time--this includes the military services).

3. To unemployment (which may lead to social welfare programs). Some may flounder in this area until about age 26.

Research indicates that students planning on formal further education beyond high school receive more services than do those planning to enter the workforce or the military upon high school graduation.

Those students not finding full time employment before graduation or those accepted into college have little information about where to turn for help the day after high school graduation. My major concern is with those young people not going on to further education or not finding full time employment. These young people need support and encouragement in making plans for their future.

RATIONALE FOR SUCH A SYSTEM:

My goal is that students, their parents, and school staffs all share responsibility for the successful transition of each high school graduate to the next phase of their career. (I am interested in those that drop out before graduation, but, my major energy is focused on high school graduates.)

I also realize that career development begins much earlier than in high school and well before the senior year. But, we cannot continue to wait to implement a K-12 system of career development in all of our schools.

Each and every school district in the United States needs to develop and implement some type of school transition program for all their graduates. My suggested system making use of the **"handover card"** will assist districts in developing an empirical data base for their managment infomation system and district accountability system.

Having such a system in place is only a starting point and not a finishing point. It is the basic starting point for curriculum change within the school district. It appears to me that most school districts operate under the philosophy that K-12 schooling is almost totally geared to the college bound students to the neglect of those going to work or flowing into the pool of the unemployed or underemployed.

Only when you have a management system and graduate follow-up system in place

can you make curriculum changes that assist all students no matter what their career plans may be for the future.

A SIX MONTH TRIAL SYSTEM:

Any meanigful attempt at career development would begin well before the senior year. It would begin when the student enters the school system. My idea for the **"handover card"** would ideally begin in the first year of high school rather than the six months before graduation.

To test this system I would like to encourge students, parents, and school staffs to try it on a trial basis starting in January of the senior year. If it proves to have some merit and value on such a short term basis you may consider expanding the process next school year.

You would at least have a systematic start on a managment system that may prove to be of value in future years. We are all concerned about the successful transitiion of all of our graduates to the next phase of their life and career. Does our educational system work well for all graduates?

You may find the three following pages of some value as you move ahead with some of these ideas.

(1.) **WHAT MAY THE SCHOOL DO**
(2.) **WHAT MAY THE STUDENT DO**
(3.) **WHAT MAY THE PARENTS DO**

(PLEASE CONTINUE)

COUNTDOWN TO GRADUATION
(SCHOOL STAFF)

JANUARY — Develop some type of handover card for use with all seniors. Prepare a personal letter for seniors in which you ask them if they need additional help in career planning for their future beyond high school. Include a simple survey form in which you ask about college plans, employment plans, and what other help that they may need.

FEBRUARY — Tabulate data which was received from student survey. Sort into three areas: **work bound; college bound, uncertain plans.** Meet with staff to review graduation plans--set a course of action to meet all needs.

MARCH — Have in depth counselling sessions with all those students who are uncertain regarding their future career plans. Counsel with all those who will be seeking employment upon graduation. (These may be small group sessions rather than individual sessions.) Continue college bound counselling.

APRIL — Encourage teachers to have all students prepare resumes and write essays on their plans beyond high school. Have students develop resumes using computer based programs. Invite employers to visit the school and review resumes and speak about the interviewing processes. If you have a partnership with business involve that partner in the process. Provide career information about local career opportunities. Conduct local employers regarding career opportunities.

MAY — Work closely with those students who are seeking employment after graduation. Contact the State Employment Service regarding what they may do to help students. Ask them to visit the school and work with job seekers. Try to find senior volunteers who may help in the job search for the graduates.

JUNE — Work closely with those students non-accepted into college or finding full time employment. Make sure that all graduates know where to go for help after graduation. Consider taking, all who care to go, to the State Employment Service to register for employment. Make sure they all know where the office is located. Involve the local community college in this transition process. Some colleges may help in future transition. **Make sure each graduate knows where to go for career help and advice after high school graduation.**

GRADUATION DAY

JULY — Review the school transiliton process. Prepare a report on the transition experiences of all graduates by group. College, military, employment, and those handed over to next level agency. Complete **handover cards.**

Countdown to Graduation by Albert Pautler, Copyright by author.

COUNTDOWN TO GRADUATION
(STUDENT)

JANUARY — In about six months you will graduate from this high school. Have you started to make plans for your life and career after graduation ? You cannot do anything about your school work other than this final semester. If you have not already done so you can start to take charge of your career planning process. In six short months you will seek employment, enter the military, go on to college, or be in the pool of the unemloyed or under-employed. You have six months to obtain services of the professional staff of this high school. If you need help ask for it now. Seek help from your guidance counselor regard-your plans after high school----employment, military, further education.

FEBRUARY — If you are not planning to go on to further education it is very important that you seek advice regarding employment possibilities, the military, apprenticeship opportunities or other types of employment. Seek out occupational information from your guidance staff or career center. Start to put togther a resume and seek help from your English, technology, business, or computer teachers. You may find some computer software dealing with resume preparation. Many schools have career guidance services by means of interactive computer programs. Check it out.

MARCH — It is a responsiblity of the school staff to assist you in making a smoooth transitiion to the next phase of your career. That may be work, schooling, or the military. If you are thinking about a military career inform your guidance counselor who can put you in touch with various recruiters. Involve your parents in the process. Try to keep your parents informed about your future career plans--they care about you and are concerned about your future.

APRIL — By this time if you are planning on attending college in the fall you should be accepted and making your final plans. If you are seeking full time employment after graduation you should be engage in a job search. Seek the help of your guidance counselor, interested teachers, your parents, and relatives. Spread the word about your desires and the type of employment you would like. But, consider what skills you have to offer an employer. What are your basic and advanced skills. What do your have to offer an employer ? It is a difficult world beyond high school. You need good skills to make it.

MAY — If you are not planning on attending college and do not have promised employment at this time, seek out your guidance counselor for advice and help. Make plans to register with the State Employment agency in your area. Your parents may be able to assist you in registering with the Employment agency. You may want to think about a local trade or technical school for further education or training. A good source could be the local community college. Check it out.

JUNE — This is it your last month of high school. For some this may be the last chance for formal education. However, that is doubtful, with the present economy. Most of us will have to be lifelong learners. It is essential if you are not employed at this time to see your counselor---for last minute help and advice. Make sure you register with the State Employment agency for employment. **GOOD SUCCESS.**

Countdown to Graduation by Albert Pautler, Copyright by author. 5

COUNTDOWN TO GRADUATION
(PARENTS)

JANUARY — In about six months your daughter or son will be graduating from high school and entering the next phase of his/her life. If your child is planning on going on to further education you have been involved in planning for this transition. It may be that you have been in close contact with the school guidance counselor during this decision making process. If your child is planning on a military career upon graduation you should have been involved in this decision process. If your daughter/son is planning to enter the workforce upon graduation your help and interest in this process will also be needed. Please offer your concern and interest at this time.

FEBRUARY — In five months your high school senior will be graduating and making a transition to the next phase of his/her career. Make sure that you take the time to discuss future career plans with your child. No doubt you have been doing this for the past several years, but, now the time of transitiion is fast approaching. Your support and interest is needed and very important at this time. College plans should be well in place by this time. If the military is a possible choice---this transtion should be well in place at this time. If entering the work-force is the route to be followed--decisions need to be made regarding a career field.

MARCH — The focus of this countdown now focuses on those seniors planning on entering the workforce upon graduation. As parents, become involved in the process along with your son/daughter and the school guidance counselor. Determine how much help your child can obtain from the school in making the transition to employment upon graduation. Work with your child on the development of a resume and obtaining career information.

APRIL — Encourage your senior to seek active help from the guidance staff in arranging for a smooth transition to employment upon graduation. Involve yourself in the process--demonstrate a serious interest in helping your daughter/son in this trasnstion process.

MAY — If your senior has not been accepted into further education, the military, or found full time employment by this time some alternate plans may need to be made. What is important is that your soon to be graduated senior needs to know where to go for career help the day after graduation from high school. Are school guidance services and job placement services available to graduates in your school district ?

JUNE — Graduation day is fast approaching. Are plans in place for a smooth transition to college, the military, or employment ? What is your son or daughter going to be doing the day after graduation ? Make sure that your senior knowns how to register with the local office of the State Employment Service. Your graduate will need your help and interest even more at this point in order to avoid entering the pool of the unemployed or underemployed. **GOOD SUCCESS TO ALL OF YOU.**

GRADUATE FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

The Western New York Educational Service Council (WNYESC) would like to inform you of a service that it is in a position to offer school districts on a fee basis. This service involves follow-up studies of high school graduates.

Dr. Albert Pautler, Professor, Graduate School of Education, has been engaged in graduate follow-up studies for about the past four years. The effort began with a demonstration project involving four school districts in what has been called the **Cheektowaga Transition Project**. This project lasted about three years and involved mail and telephone contacts with high school graduates two years after high school completion.

In 1994 a contract with the Western New York Management Team comprising five BOCES was entered into that involved ten (10) school districts in Western New York. This project was called the **Career Pathways Project** and involved a telephone interview with a random sample of graduates one and two years after high school completion. This project was conducted during the summer of 1994 and is now in its final phase.

The Western New York Educational Service Council and Dr. Pautler would like to continue this project an involve a small group of selected school districts in the project. We estimate the cost to each district would be about $3000.00. This is based upon the specifications for the project which follow.

Project Specifications:

Telephone inteviews would be conducted with a stratified random sample of high school graduates from the previous two graduating classes. The sample would involve 10 Regents Diploma Graduates, 10 Local Diploma Graduates, and 10 learners who completed the BOCES Occupational Education program, for each of the past two graduating classes. A total of 60 high school graduates for the two years would be included in the sample from each district.

Each participating school district would provide the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and program of completion, letter of approval to contact graduates, and a press release to the local paper advising graduates of the study.

Such studies are best conducted during the college semester break or during the summer. This is so returning college students can be contacted while they are at home.

We have developed a structured telephone interview format which is used for data collection. It takes about 10 minutes to complete the process of the interview. The data collected is both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

Dr. Albert Pautler (SUNYAB) reviews the data and completes the qualitative analysis. Dr. Howard Kight (SUNYAB) serves on the study team and is responsible for entering the data and evaluating the quantitative analysis of the data.

Reporting Procedures:

Each participating school district will receive a written final report which includes both quantitative and qualitative results of the study. This includes a part of the completed interview format, but, not the name of the individual student. We can also provide comparative analysis on the qualtitative data based upon other school districts that have taken part in the project.

For districts within 25 miles of SUNYAB a formal presentation can be made at the time final study results are provided to the interested parties. For districts beyond 25 miles added costs would be involved in the formal presentation. This would be discussed on an individual basis.

Interest in Such a Study:

Please contact Dr. Robert Heller, Executive Director, WNYESC, if you are interested in such a project at this time. Consider trying to involve several neighboring districts so that you can have some local comparative data to compare your results with plus possibly contracting through BOCES as a cooperative evaluation.

Contact Dr. Al Pautler if you are interested in details dealing with the design and processes of the study. Please call Al at 716-645-3164.

Thank you.

SCHOOL TRANSITION THEORY
THE HANDOVER CARD PROCESS

BY

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INTRODUCTION:

This is a second essay dealing with school-to-emloyment transitiion theory and process. It follows my 1994 essay **Countdown to Graduation** and is designed to assist those concerned with the transition process of high school graduates to the next phase of their lives.

In the early 1970's the United States was involved in a heavy program of Career Education. This seemed to run it's course and enjoyed Federal and State funding until the late 1970's. In the early 1990's school-to-work and workforce preparation programs and grants have returned to the education community. At the present time we are hearing and reading a great deal about these two topics. Schools with a serious interest in the career development of all students are really involved in both Career Education and school-to-work (S-T-W) transition.

My concern is to encourage those responsible for public and private schooling in the United States to help smooth the transition of high school graduates to the next phase of their lives. **Every high school graduate needs to be handed over to some next agency upon graduation from high school.** I am suggesting that each and every high school design some form of **handover card or process** for every high school graduate and to keep accurate empirical data on what happens to the graduates.

A SIMPLE TRANSITION THEORY:

I fully realize that career development and transition theory are complex and require a great deal of study. The current interest in school-to-work transition, workforce preparation, and career pathways all are directly related to career development theory.

My idea of school transition theory is simple and to the point. It is a starting point and not an ending point. It needs consideration and discussion at a variety of levels. High school graduates exit school in one of three ways:

1. To further education (community college, college, etc.)

2. To employment (full time or part time---includes the military service)

3. To unemployment (which may lead to social welfare programs). Some graduates may flounder in this area until about age 26.

Research indicates that students planning on formal education beyond high school receive more services than do those planning to enter the workforce or the military upon high school graduation. I argue that all students need equal attention in making a smooth transition to the next phase of their lives.

I urge those responsible for public and private schools to develop some form of **handover card** or **handover process** to make sure that every graduate is provided services and attention to smooth the transition process. In addition school districts should maintain an empirical data base on the transition experiences of their graduates. This data should feedback into the curriculum development process for future students.

RATIONALE FOR THE HANDOVER CARD:

My goal is that students, their parents, school staffs, boards of education, the community, business partnerships, etc. share in the responsibilities of making school transition and the **handover process** and important goal for all schools.

My essay, **Countdown to Graduation**, suggested active involvement of students, parents, and school staff during the six month period prior to high school graduation as a means of assisting in the transition experience of all graduates.

This essay attempts to more fully develop my ideas regarding the development of a **handover card** and/or **handover process.**

My rationale is simple. All graduates need to be handed over to some next agency upon graduation from high school. All graduates need to know where they can turn to for further services after high school graduation.

School districts need to keep data on the school transition experiences of all graduates.

THE HANDOVER PROCESS:

School administrators and staff members need to give serious consideration to some method that would insure that all graduates, upon graduation, are handed over to some next agency. It may be that your school has a process in place to insure that all graduates are handed over to some next agency. In many cases this responsibility may be placed on the guidance staff of the school.

My goal is that every graduate be given the support and opportunity to be handed over to some next agency. If 100 students will be graduating in June, each and everyone of the graduates, should be handed over to some next agency. That agency might be anyone of the following: employer; community college; the military (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard); private trade, business, technical school; college or university; State employment service; social agency; etc.

The most important part of this process is to make sure that every graduate knows were to turn for help and advice after high school graduation. Of special concern are those about to graduate who are not sure of their future plans. Members of this group need special attention given to their transition plans. You may want to consider the following questions before working on your school handover process.

1. Does our district have a plan in place to assure that all graduates are given equal attention in their school transition planning ?

2. Does our district have an empirical data base in place that records and reports data on all high school graduates to the staff and community ?

3. Are graduates, not accepted into further education, not entering the military, not employed,j given any special counselling services prior to graduation ?

4. May former graduates return to the school district for guidance services ? Do we have a firm policy on this topic ?

5. Are graduates who are seeking employment turned over to the State Employment Service prior to high school graduation ?

6. What is the role of the local community college in the district handover process ?

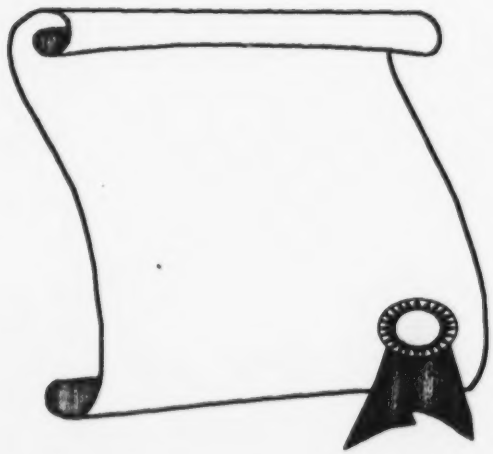
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS:

The purpose of this essay is to encourage those responsible for public and private secondary education to give consideration to the transition experiences of high school graduates. Each high school graduate should be handed over to some next agency upon graduation. Programs of this nature may help those entering the workforce or planning for further education. **All graduates** deserve equal attention.

Think about it. Do something about it, NOW.

HANDOVER PROCESS

- ALBERT J. PAUTLER, ED.D.
- GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
- UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO
- 478 BALDY HALL
- BUFFALO, NY 14260
- PHONE 716-645-3164
- FAX 716-645-2481



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PURPOSE

- ASSIST GRADUATES IN SCHOOL TRANSITION PROCESS TO :
- FURTHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES
- MILITARY CAREERS
- EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- GUIDANCE SERVICE
- STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
- COMMUNITY COLLEGE SERVICES

HANDOVER PLANNING

- SCHOOL DISTRICT PLAN
- EMPIRICAL DATA BASE FOR PLANNING
- EQUAL GUIDANCE SERVICES FOR ALL STUDENTS
- CONTINUING GUIDANCE SERVICES
- STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
- ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
- OTHER SERVICE AGENCIES (PIC)
- ACCESS CENTERS

HANDOVER CARD

- A CARD FOR EVERY STUDENT ABOUT TO GRADUATE
- DESIGN OF CARD OR PROCESS
- PROCESS TO BEGIN ?
- BASIC DESIGN

NAME: Mary Jane Williams

- HANDOVER CARD
- ADVISOR/MENTOR: CAROL RHODES
- MARY JANE WILLIAMS UPON HIGH SCHOL GRADUATION ON JUNE 20, 1995 IS HANDED OVER TO:
- UNITED STATES NAVY---BASIC TRAINING TO BEGIN AT GREAT LAKES ON JULY 15, 1995.
- GOOD SUCCESS TO MARY JANE
- MARYVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

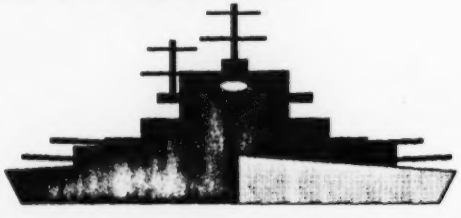
NAME: Mark J. Rogers

- HANDOVER CARD
- ADVISOR/MENTOR: ROBERT JONES
- MARK ROGERS UPON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION ON JUNE 21, 1995 IS HANDED OVER TO:
- COLBY-SAWYER COLLEGE, NH---COLLEGE STUDIES TO BEGIN ON SEPT. 10, 1995.
- GOOD SUCCESS TO MARK ROGERS
- NEUMANN HIGH SCHOOL

NAME: Dana W. Kappa

- HANDOVER CARD
- ADVISOR/MENTOR: ANNA SMITH
- DANA KAPPA UPON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION ON JUNE 22, 1995 IS HANDED OVER TO:
- NATIONAL FUEL GAS---EMPLOYMENT TO BEGIN ON JULY 1, 1995.
- GOOD SUCCESS TO DANA KAPPA
- WARREN CITY SCHOOLS

NAME: Mary Jane Williams



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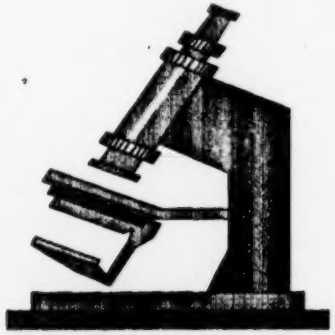

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